

T O C S I N

SEPTEMBER~OCTOBER 1980

T H E T O C S I N

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J O H N H O W A R D S O C I E T Y

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*TOCSIN: A Warning Bell or Signal of Alarm

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Front Cover drawn by Robert Aucoin

One of the stated objectives of the John Howard Society is to "work for reform in all aspects of the Criminal Justice System in order that our system will be effective and fair for everyone." One of the ways to work for reform is to point out the injustices that exist in the system. That is the reason for this newsletter.

At a recent J.H.S. meeting at Collins Bay, an outside member of our Group talked about exposing the injustices as the only way to bring about changes. We agree and because we are in constant contact with the system, we believe there isn't anyone more qualified to write about areas where reform is required than prisoners themselves. Unfortunately, for us, it is the "experts" with their college diplomas who decide prison and parole policy. Many of these experts have never seen a prison except in the movies or on television.

The views expressed in the Tocsin are not necessary those of the Collins Bay Administration, the Canadian Corrections Service, the John Howard Society of Canada or any other body of the criminal justice system.

We are indebted to the John Howard Society of Ontario for the paper and printing of this issue. Their gesture is greatly appreciated but we are going to require subscriptions if we are to continue.

We welcome contributions from our readers in the way of articles, poetry, jokes, etc. as we hope to have something in each edition to appeal to everyone. We also welcome Letters to the Editor and the Brickbats are as welcome as any bouquets.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Collins Bay Chapter of the John Howard Society is nearly two years old. Until recently, we operated as an information-gathering agency, both for the prison population and for other J.H.S. branches. We believe that it is now time to change our passive stance. We believe that the Group has a responsibility to prisoners everywhere to articulate their concerns about the environment they find themselves in and the system that controls it.

It is for this reason that we have named our newsletter "TOCSIN" Webster defines the word as "... an alarm bell or warning signal" and Britannica's definition, amongst other things, is "a TOCSIN was the alarm that was sounded in olden times when an invading army was sighted on the horizon." The Chapter is moving toward a more activist stance because we as prisoners must lead the way. We are more aware than anyone on the Street where we are coming from and the direction we feel we should take. So, we shall be sounding warning bells to draw attention to those issues we think are important and demand priority. We shall be controversial but we also recognize our responsibility to be constructive and our accountability to the John Howard movement as a whole (of which we are proud to be members) and, above all, an obligation to our readers to make this a lively and interesting publication.

To carry out the difficult assignment as Editor of this newsletter, we are most fortunate to have obtained the services of George Watson. George is a long-time activist for prisoners' rights, the co-founder of the Newsletter of Millhaven's Odyssey Group and a talented and accomplished writer with many articles published in street papers and magazines.

This newsletter can only carry out its objectives if it is supported by a firm subscriber base. If you wish to help us help "cons" please subscribe today. You will find a subscription blank on the back page.

Geoff DuBois

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

The Collins Bay Chapter of the John Howard Society, now well into its second year of operation, has achieved and perhaps even surpassed the high expectations that both its founding members and those within the Kingston and Ontario branches originally envisaged.

We have had almost two hundred guests attend meetings including Robert Kaplan, the Solicitor General, Lloyd Pisapio, Deputy Commissioner of Offender Programs, several judges, Crown and defense lawyers, a number of correctional service staff members, the Regional Director for the Ontario Region, several members of the National Parole Board, representatives from various social and professional organizations, staff and volunteer workers from most branches of the J.H.S. in Ontario, staff of most Half-Way Houses in Ontario and a broad cross-section of people from every walk in life who simply wanted to see for themselves a little of what goes on behind our sinister-looking walls. We are confident that most, if not all, no matter how apprehensive they might have been when they came to Collins Bay, left with new, and hopefully more positive impressions and attitudes than they brought with them when they came through the front gate.

Collins Bay is a self-contained and functioning society with most of the components present in the outside community. We have a hospital, library, laundry, cafeteria, gymnasium, school, trades shops, barber shop, an industrial area, canteen, ball fields, cultural groups, and yes it's true - we even have ten colour television sets but before you write to your federal MP to complain about the latter, we must point out that these TV's were purchased with prisoners' funds.

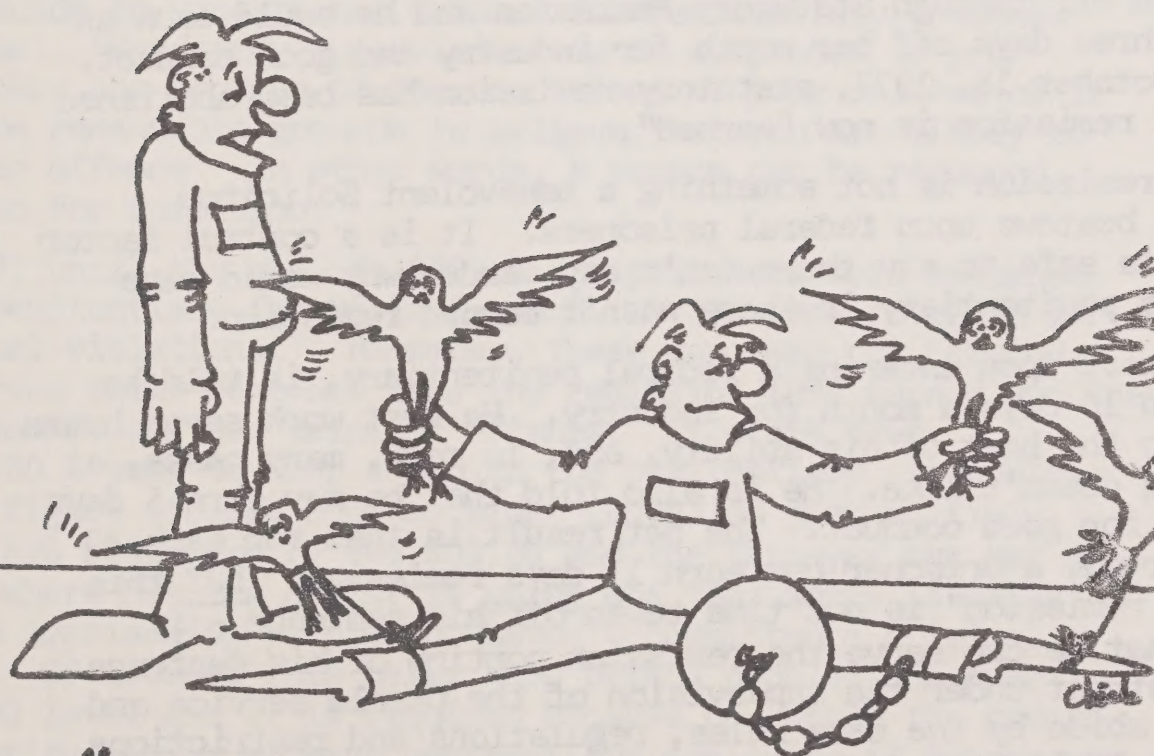
Some members of the public, reading inaccuracies in the newspapers, have described Canada's prisons as "country clubs" but there isn't anyone who has visited a penitentiary that left with that opinion. Canada does not have the worst prison system in the world but it does not rank with the top systems either.

We hope to give a small segment of the public a more intimate view of their prisons and a more accurate picture of the criminal justice system because we believe that an informed

public is better armed to help us bring about the changes we believe are long overdue.

Our strong desire to communicate our feelings to the public is probably one of the major reasons behind the creation of this newsletter and we sincerely hope you will enjoy it, learn from it and maybe even consider coming into Collins Bay or a prison in your community. Here at the "Bay", our Chapter meets every Thursday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. All that is required from you is a brief note including your full name and date of birth. This is required for clearance by security. We look forward to meeting you.

John McQuarrie



"Well... back to the old drawing board."

EDITORIAL

In January of this year, Ottawa sent out a questionnaire requesting briefs and submissions pertaining to Mandatory Supervision. Ottawa has not announced any official decision yet but the Deputy Commissioner of Penitentiaries, John Braithwaite, in a speech he made in British Columbia, last month, stated "Mandatory Supervision will not be abolished because the public wouldn't stand for it." Nonsense. The public doesn't even know what Mandatory Supervision is or anything about it.

Mandatory Supervision is that portion of a prisoner's sentence (his earned remission) that is served under the supervision of the National Parole Service. Justice Hegessen in a report he wrote suggested that M.S. is unethical. He is right. It is unethical and also - unjust.

Prior to 1970, a prisoner served his sentence minus his remission and was then released - completely free. The way that remission was calculated in those days was different than it is today. A prisoner was credited with one-quarter of his sentence off through Statutory Remission and he could earn an extra three days off per month for industry and good conduct. Since October 15, 1977, statutory remission has been abolished and all remission is now "earned".

Earned remission is not something a benevolent Solicitor General bestows upon federal prisoners. It is a control factor and it is safe to say there isn't any warden who would care to run a penitentiary if there wasn't earned remission.

A prisoner, upon entering a federal penitentiary, is told he may earn 10 days a month for industry. He must work seven hours a day to the best of his ability, and, in many, many cases, at a job he doesn't like. He is also told that he may earn 5 days a month for good conduct. The net result is that for each 30 days served, a prisoner can earn 15 days remission. BUT this "earned remission" is not time taken off his sentence - it means that he can serve the remission portion of his sentence on the street under the supervision of the parole service and he must abide by the same rules, regulations and restrictions as he would if he had received a parole.

During his sentence, a prisoner might have applied for parole but in 70% of the cases, parole was denied. Therefore, the prisoner serves his sentence, earns his remission and when it

is time for him to be released, he is handed a paper to sign which is an agreement that he will abide by the rules, etc. as laid down by the parole service. If he doesn't sign, he has to remain in prison and serve his earned remission. In reality, there isn't any such thing as "earned remission." Remission means time off of your sentence but if a prisoner refuses to go out on M.S., he remains in prison. That is what Justice Hugessen was referring to when he termed M.S. "unethical."

If a prisoner does leave prison on M.S., he must serve his earned remission under the supervision of the same people who denied him parole! He can be returned to prison for "technical violations". Some of these technical violations are: travelling outside of a 25-mile radius of where he lives without permission, in some cases, drinking alcohol, getting married without permission, buying a car without permission, not reporting to his parole office on time, not obtaining a job and a host of other petty regulations and restrictions. None of them are criminal offences! The most devious regulation and one that doesn't belong in a country that contends it is a democracy is found on page 17 of the Guide to Conditional Release for Penitentiary Inmates. It states: "Mandatory Supervision may be suspended if you have broken one or more of the conditions of your release or if there are reasonable grounds to believe that you are likely to commit an offence" In other words, a person can be returned to prison for suspicion.

From 1972 until the end of 1978, 5,986 prisoners were returned to the penitentiary for violating M.S. 2,625 were returned for "technical violations." Remember, these men were not paroled, they served their sentence less the remission they earned and they didn't commit any new criminal offence! It costs over \$45,000.00 a year to keep a man in the penitentiary (regardless of what figure official sources might quote) so just multiply those 2,625 prisoners by \$45,000.00 and the taxpayer can get an idea of where his tax dollar is going and that money is being spent on imprisoning people who haven't committed a criminal offence. Of course, this helps keep prison populations over the 9,000 level and it is required because how would the government justify having so many penitentiary employees if there were 1,000 more employees than prisoners instead of the approximately 200 more staff than prisoners at present.

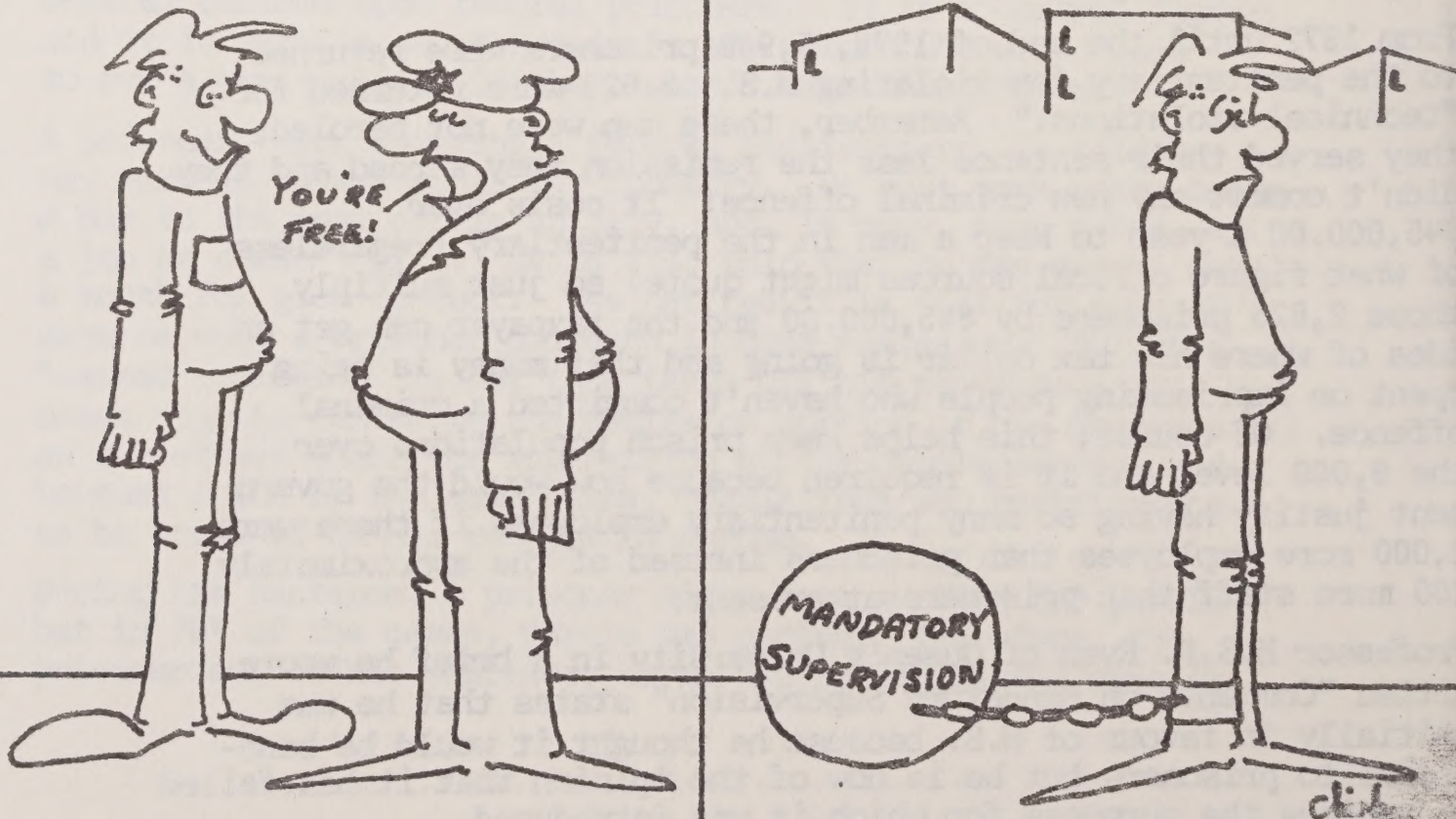
Professor H.S.R. Ryan of Queen's University in a brief he wrote titled "Comments on Mandatory Supervision" states that he was initially in favour of M.S. because he thought it would be beneficial to prisoners but he is now of the opinion that it has failed to achieve the purposes for which it was introduced.

Professor Ryan also recommends that earned remission lead to complete freedom without supervision.

M.S. is one of the major factors responsible for the unrest that exists throughout the penitentiary system in Canada today. There aren't any incentives to work and there aren't any good reasons why prisoners should obey the petty rules and regulations which are in effect. They can't take away something we haven't been given, and with M.S. in effect, there isn't any such thing as "earned remission." If any prisoner doubts this let him refuse to sign the agreement with the parole service; let him refuse to leave prison under M.S. He will then discover that the remission he "earned" isn't really earned and he is going to remain in prison for his full sentence.

Finally, I wonder why the public is considered whenever anything effecting prisoners is mentioned but the public is never considered when income taxes or any other taxes are being raised. By the way, has anyone asked your opinion on the new, proposed constitution, Mr. & Mrs. Public?"

George Watson



FAMILY VISITS

The announcement that family visiting will commence this year at Millhaven, Archambault, Dorchester, Stony Mountain and Kent prisons is a welcome, and long overdue one.

There is agreement that this programme should be initiated in maximum security prisons where prisoners are not considered for Day Parole, Temporary Absences or parole of any nature. These prisons are where the programme is required the most.

The one concern is that this program will be used as a weapon over a prisoner's head. Family visiting will benefit both the prisoner and his family and under no circumstances should a prisoner's behaviour be a factor. If a prisoner breaks any of the numerous rules and regulations, he is punished by being sent to the "hole" (Solitary confinement), losing remission or other privileges but family visiting should not be treated as a privilege. If Ottawa is truly sincere and wants to make this program a success, they must ensure that authorities at regional headquarters or at the institutional level don't add their own riders as they usually do with other programs.

For example, if you the reader are stopped for speeding while driving your car and appear in court, are convicted and are sentenced to a \$50.00 fine, how would you feel if as you were walking out of court, the judge called you back and informed you that for the next 90 days you wouldn't be permitted to attend any social events? You would want to know what connection there was between you being arrested for speeding and, after being punished already, your social life being interfered with. This is what happens in prison.

At Collins Bay, a prisoner who is a member of the J.H.S. for example and attends weekly meetings regularly would look forward to attending the annual social. If a guard charged him with an offence, insolence, contraband, etc. (absolutely nothing that is connected with JHS meetings), he would be punished for the offence and if it occurred three months prior to the social, he would be unable to attend the social. It is things like this that brings about the concerns in the manner the family visiting program will be conducted. Unfortunately, there are prison guards in every prison who will harass prisoners knowing the prisoners will react and thereby give the guard the opportunity

to charge them. Once again, unfortunately, there are many of these type of guards at Millhaven as can be verified by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee's Report on the Penitentiary System and Gerard McNeil's book "Cruel & Unusual."

To punish a prisoner with the punishment being applied to family visiting also punishes the family, and in case anyone forgot, the family hasn't done anything wrong - except to love the prisoner. I guess, in Canada, some people consider that a crime.

Steve Usher



"They are going to allow them Family Visiting!"

"Next, they will expect to be treated like human beings."

A GRAND ILLUSION OF FREEDOM?

(Reprinted from August 30th Edition of
Let's Talk)

Mary Lozano, a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology and a research officer with the Department of the Navy (USA) recently did a study of Mexico's revolutionary federal penal colony, Las Islas Marias, a 145 square kilometre island paradise off the Pacific coast of Mexico where male inmates and their families are separated from escape by 90 miles of shark-infested waters. She was in Ottawa to talk to Commissioner Yeomans and Senior Management Committee members about her six-month observations of the island prison.

Las Islas Marias is an amazing place. It's a maximum-security penitentiary where inmates are sent from mainland prisons. They arrive by the weekly boat, a seven-hour trip, and their first sight of the island is one of residents waving a welcome to them. New prisoners can elect to move in with other offenders from their region in Mexico, they can live in college-type dormitories or they can be assigned a house for themselves and their families.

There are no ID cards on Las Islas Marias, mail is not censored and long distance calls are available if they can pay for them. Prisoners work, prepare their meals, do their laundry, visit the doctor, repair their houses, see their guidance counsellor, go to restaurants, send their children off to the local school each morning and run their own business if they wish to.

Only two requirements separate them from the free citizens; they must stay on the island and they must work. No one has ever escaped and an offender who won't work is returned to another prison on the mainland. The island has so many benefits that this almost never happens, said Dr. Lozano.

Prisoners must find themselves employment from such occupations as farming, cattle-raising, gardening, mechanics, electrical work, carpentry, tailoring, production of lime, salt and slab, construction, clerical, lumbering, domestic labour and service industries like barbering, restaurants, laundering etc.

In this prison colony, rent and utilities are free and every offender gets a monthly food and clothing allowance as well

as his subsistence pay from his job which supports him, and, if he works hard, his family as well. There is no warden, no guards and no classification of inmates (being labelled dangerous only makes you more so, the Mexican government believes.) However, there is a director and sailors from the Naval base serve as "police" or security staff.

There are movies, the beaches and lots of recreational activities. Inmates can roam anywhere after work is done although there is a 9 p.m. curfew. The Mexican Navy patrols the island 24 hours a day.

About 2,300 people live on the island of which 800 are prisoners. The Naval base there also provides a source of jobs for offenders. Schools are good and so are medical facilities since Mexican citizens consider it a plum to work on Las Islas Marias because they can easily save money and because the penal colony is such an interesting and unique place, Dr. Lozano says.

Mexico plans to set up another similar colony in the jungles of Yucatan.

Las Islas Marias (there are several islands) became a prison in 1905 during the Mexico revolution and housed political prisoners in "ghastly conditions". In 1930 it became a federal penitentiary and ten years later a penal colony for inmates and their families.

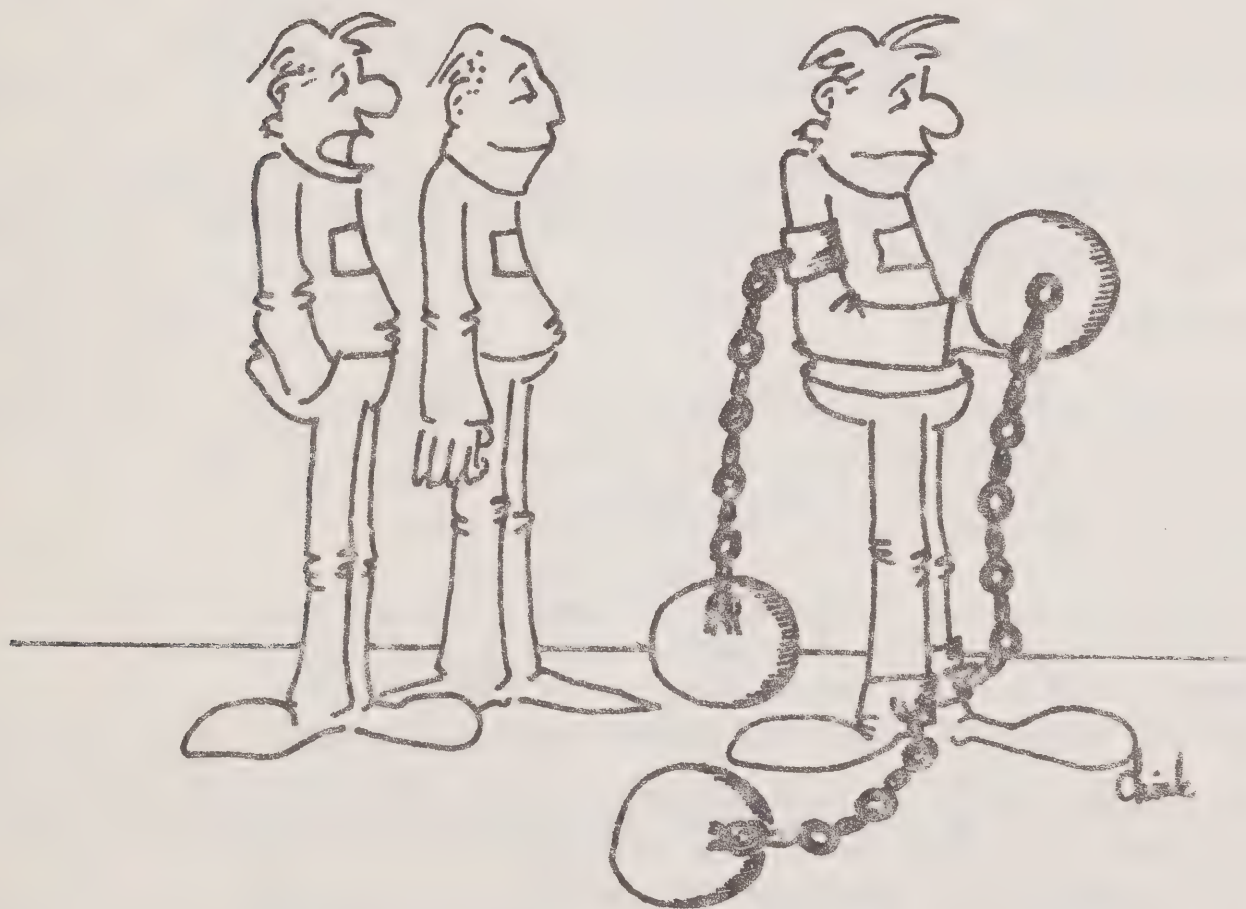
Inmates don't have to be married to go to Las Islas Marias. They can form liaisons or marry after their arrival. Many offenders marry the daughters of other offenders. Sons are sent to mainland, by law, at 16, to get them away from the prison atmosphere but daughters are free to stay or leave as they choose.

The colony has been very successful, says Dr. Lozano, because of its uniquely humane conditions. Fifty percent of offenders are murderers serving sentences of 10 to 15 years. Only one murderer is remembered and that was not in the last five years. Offenders know that if either they, or their wives, misbehave, they will be sent off the island and this acts as a strong deterrent.

Mexico official penal policy holds that prisoners should be deprived of their freedom, but not their humanity. Family unity is considered to be exceptionally important to social rehabilitation.

Ed. Note: This penal colony has been existence for the past

40 years and Mexico is supposed to be a "backward" country and Canada is supposed to be a "modern" country. It is understandable why Canada would not adopt a policy similar to Mexico when one discovers there aren't any penitentiary staff on Las Islas Marias. In Canada, we have more staff than prisoners and Canada also doesn't adopt the Mexican attitude of prisoners only being denied their freedom and not their humanity. In Canada, prisoners are not considered humans.



"I think he's.... maximum security."

SEARCHES

Conrad Gunn, a prisoner at Matsqui Penitentiary took the penitentiary service to court in British Columbia on the grounds they were illegally searching him by "skin-frisking" him and forcing him to bend over, while nude, to expose himself each time they were taking him to an outside hospital for treatment. The procedure was repeated upon his return to the prison. He based his case on the Penitentiary Service Regulation which stated: "there has to be reasonable grounds to suspect an inmate is in possession of contraband ..."

Gunn won his case and the Solicitor General's department appealed - the Appeal Court upheld the lower court's decision. In one of the fastest cases of legislation ever being passed, the wording of the regulation was changed dealing with searches and "reasonable grounds" was deleted.

It was to be expected because there isn't room in the vocabulary of Canada's prison authorities for words such as "reasonable" when dealing with prisoners.

What constitutes a search?

When a policeman arrests a suspect after a bank-robbery, he makes the suspect spread-eagle himself against a wall and then the policeman runs his hands over the suspect's body. The suspect is fully clothed. That constitutes a search.

When a prisoner is called to the classification department, he is compelled to pass through a metal detector and then have a prison guard run his hands over the prisoner's body. The prisoner remains clothed. That constitutes a search.

When a prisoner has to go to an outside hospital, he is forced to strip and bend over and expose his buttocks. After he is dressed, he is handcuffed and shackled. While he is at the hospital, he is never out of sight of the guards and remains handcuffed and shackled at all times. When he returns to the prison, the handcuffs and shackles are removed and the prisoner is forced to strip and go through the routine over again. That constitutes harassment!

The revised regulation permits any guard who doesn't like a

particular prisoner to "skin-frisk" him anytime the guard feels like doing so. It encourages prisoner harrassment.

There isn't any mention of the work "skin-frisk" in the revised regulation and there isn't any mention of a prisoner being forced to bend over, while nude and spreading his buttocks. It is a humiliating, degrading and depraved regulation but those words describe the penitentiary service's practices in general in their prescribed treatment of prisoners in many, more areas.

Why is there a metal detector used if the authorities don't have any faith in the detector?

Who says that the penitentiary service's interpretation of what constitutes a search is the corrent one?

It is noteworthy that when guns and dynamite were discovered in Archambault Penitentiary, it was a guard who was charged with bringing them into the prison. Doesn't that indicate that it is prison guards who should be searched?

That will never happen. Why? It wouldn't be considered to be "reasonable."

Keith Bender

P R I S O N E R S R I G H T S

While the public is mistakenly led to believe that prisoners are "pampered" and have many rights, in reality, prisoners don't have any rights even those which are legal rights.

During the work stoppage at Collins Bay of the week of September 9 to the 13th, two lawyers who came to consult their clients at Collins Bay were refused admission.

These two prisoners have to appear in criminal court to face criminal charges and the criminal code states that a suspect will be permitted to consult a lawyer.

Poor old John Diefenbaker would turn over in his grave in he ever knew what happened to his "Bill of Rights."

It is a pretty piece of paper.



"Dear Uncle, since I've seen you last,
I've grown another foot."

PAROLE BY EXCEPTION

Recently, petitions signed by the prison population at Collins Bay were sent to the chairman of the National Parole Board, William Outerbridge, on behalf of two prisoners, Sam Weiss and John Gillis, for paroles by exception on medical grounds.

In March of this year, Sam Weiss, had a quadruple coronary bypass performed on him at a downtown Kingston hospital. His gall bladder is not functioning but his health won't permit an operation, he is a diabetic and has an arthritic hip that requires an operation but again, this operation can't be performed because of the state of his health.

Sam was notified last week that his parole by exception has been granted and he will be going back to his loved ones in Brooklyn, New York, before the end of the month.

John Gillis is a 55-year-old Canadian serving a life sentence with a ten-year minimum before becoming eligible for parole. He was one of three men charged with the murder of a man. At no time was it ever suggested by the police or the courts that John committed the murder, he happened to be at the wrong place, at the wrong time and with the wrong person. He has served over 4½ years of his sentence.

While at Millhaven, John suffered two heart attacks. Consequently, he was transferred to Collins Bay. He has to take medication for his heart for the remainder of his life. He also suffers from extreme stress and doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists all recommended that he be transferred to a minimum security prison where there is a smaller population and less tension. These medical people all realize that tension could trigger a third and possibly fatal heart attack. Penitentiary officials all ignored these recommendations.

A few weeks ago, John went to a downtown hospital for treatment of a growth on his neck. Diagnosis showed the growth to be malignant. John now receives daily cobalt treatment for throat cancer.

One of the grounds for parole by exception is medical.

The regulation reads:

- (b) the inmate's physical or mental health is likely to suffer serious damage if he continues to be held in confinement.

John Gillis qualifies under this section. If two heart attacks and throat cancer doesn't qualify him who does qualify?

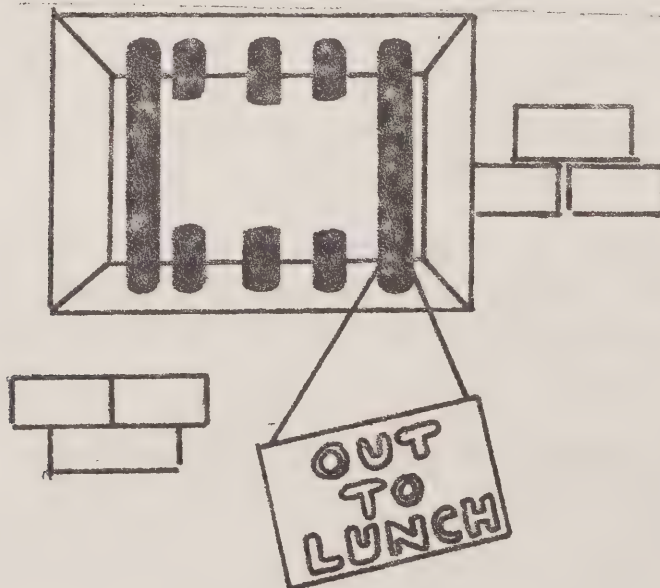
It is true we can't guarantee that John is going to die; we can't supply the hour and the day but that shouldn't be required. He is a sick man. He is a proud man and it is very sad to us, his friends, to hear the way he croaks when he talks because of the cobalt treatments.

An investigation of John's case is being made by the parole service but anytime an attempt is made by prisoners on behalf of another prisoner, we are always reminded of "public opinion."

Therefore, we are asking the readers of this paper, that if they feel that nothing is being gained by keeping John Gillis in prison and that he should be given a parole by exception on medical grounds, would they take the time and write a letter on behalf of John to:

Mr. William Outerbridge, Chairman
National Parole Board
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario

The Editors.



I N M A T E P A Y

Although the budget for the penitentiary and parole service for 1980-81 is \$426,000,000.00, less than five million of that sum is being paid to prisoners for working.

The top wage paid to prisoners for a seven-hour work day is \$1.65 per day. Out of our wages, .25¢ per day is put into our Compulsory Savings Account for the day when we are released.

A prisoner, serving a two-year sentence and earning all of his remission leaves prison with \$80.00 compulsory savings. With this money, he is expected to buy clothing, (he leaves prison with one suit of clothes), rent a place to live in, buy food and cooking utensils, soap, transportation costs while looking for employment, buy toiletries etc. and items which are required to set-up house-keeping.

Is there any wonder so many men return to crime. It isn't a question of choice - it is a necessity in order to survive.

The other \$1.40 of the prisoner's wage is canteen money. With this money he can purchase writing paper, stamps, toiletries, greeting cards, cigarettes, tobacco, an Xmas bag, etc.

Penitentiary Service Regulation 2.26 - Inmate Pay - reads,

"The rates of pay that are authorized, from time to time, to be paid to inmates shall be designed to encourage them to become better citizens upon release from custody and, in particular, to

- (a) provide greater incentive to the worker
- (b) encourage the inmate to accumulate a reasonable financial reserve for the day of his release,
- (c) motivate the inmate to work constructively and apply himself to learning training skills.

It is obvious that the penitentiary service is not abiding by their own regulations unless a person considers a top wage of \$1.65 per day as "providing greater incentives."

It is section (b) that is really being ignored. Could any sane, reasonable person consider \$80.00 (for serving a two-year sentence) as "encouraging an inmate to accumulate a reasonable financial reserve?" Not even a magician could accumulate a "reasonable financial reserve" on these wages.

The Commissioner of Penitentiaries, over a year ago, said that prisoners would be receiving a new pay scale based on the minimum wage. Now, we are being led to believe that we can consider ourselves fortunate if the new pay scale is in effect in April of 1981. That is two years since the Commissioner made his announcement!

Before anyone gets too excited about this "phantom" new pay scale, it should be said that the pay scale is only based on the minimum wage. Mr. Yeomans has it figured out that the services which prisoners receive would cost a citizen outside of prison 85% of his wages. The Kingston Whig-Standard, May 2, 1979 edition refutes Mr. Yeomans.

Here is what the Whig-Standard reported on where a citizens wages are spent.

Food - 16%, Shelter - 15.7%, Clothing - 7%, Transportation - 12.3%, and Medical and Health Services - 2%.

Let's Talk, the CPS newsletter retorted that it cost \$2.08 per day to feed a prisoner. We will say 10% of the minimum wage.

For a laugh and a sense of generosity, we will say 15.7% for shelter.

We are issued clothing when we enter the prison system but we keep the same clothing. We will say 2% for laundry.

We save the 12.3% transportation costs and the reason isn't because we are concerned about conserving energy.

We will say the same 2% for medical and health services.

That only adds up to 10%, 15.7% and 2% and 2% for a total of 29.7% which is a long, long way from the 85% Mr. Yeomans is talking about.

Of course, I have just heard on the radio, we are to receive a 10% pay increase. That won't even purchase a 17¢ stamp!

Following the section on Inmate Pay in the Regulations is the section dealing with Disciplinary Offences and Discipline. If the penitentiary service paid heed to the section on Pay even half as zealously as they do on the section on discipline, I wouldn't have to write this article.

Some Incentives - some reserves!

John Melanson



"There's no doubt in my mind... you've been stabbed."

J O K E P A G E

A student at college received a telephone call from his brother back home.

"Hi, Tommy," the brother said, "your cat's dead."

The college boy fell apart. He began crying uncontrollably. When, finally, he was able to compose himself, he scolded his brother.

"Dammit, Dick," he said. "You know how I loved that cat. You didn't have to call me and just spill it out - 'your cat's dead.' You should have broken it to me gently. You could have said: 'Tom, the cat got out the window the other day and crawled up the rainspout and got up on the roof and slipped and fell, and then you could have said it died. Now, how is Mom?'"

"Well, Mom got out the window the other day and crawled up the rainspout ..."

Trudeau, after his first year as Prime Minister, and while the country was still in the throes of Trudeaumania, happened to be dining in a Montreal restaurant when a young man came over to his table.

"Excuse me, sir, my name is Charlie Finlayson. I'm sitting over there with my girlfriend and her parents and I was wondering if, when you are ready to leave, you'd pass by the table and just say, 'Hi, Charlie!' It would really impress them, you know?"

The Prime Minister said he would.

Later, Trudeau finished his meal and, true to his word, he paused at the young man's table.

"Hi Charlie!" Trudeau said cheerily, patting him on the shoulder.

"Don't bother me now, Pierre," the young man said. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

A Nova Scotia newspaper received this letter from a reader named McTavish:

"If you print any more jokes about Scotsmen, I shall discontinue borrowing your newspaper."

J O K E P A G E

It was just off the coast of Newfoundland that a cargo ship collided with a fishing boat in a heavy fog. Fortunately, little damage resulted, but as the cargo ship came about, it struck the fishing boat again.

Concerned that the second collision might have damaged the trawler seriously, the ships captain asked on the megaphone:

"Are you still afloat?"

"Yes," the reply came back. "Why? Are you going to try again?"

Pierre Trudeau was making his way down a crowded sidewalk with some friends and aides on his way to a party in celebration of his re-election as Prime Minister. At a pedestrian crossing, he and the others stepped off the curb only to be waved back by a traffic cop.

"Hold on!" the officer shouted to them, "wait for the traffic to stop completely!"

"Officer," one of Trudeau's aides shouted back zealously, "do you know who you're ordering about? This is Canada's greatest Prime Minister."

"Beg your pardon," the officer replied courteously, "but you will still have to wait, Mr. Diefenbaker."

"You know," one English-speaking Quebecker said wistfully, "I wish Rene Levesque was the pope instead of premier."

"But why?" his friend asked.

"Because that way," came the reply, "we'd only have to kiss his ring."

Sign on fence in Montreal: "Yankee go home - but not until you finish your shopping."

P R I S O N J U S T I C E D A Y

(Reprinted from the Vancouver Sun, August 8, 1980
Edition)

Six years ago, on August 10, 1974, Edward Nalon ended his life in the solitary confinement unit at Millhaven Maximum Security Prison near Kingston. He had been informed 11 days before by the Segregation Review Board that he would be released back into the main population.

Nalon was serving a life sentence, and to be locked up in a ten-by-six foot cell for 23½ hours a day, indefinitely, was a grim prospect indeed. When the judge sentenced him to prison there was no mention that he would be held in solitary for the rest of his life. The judge intended that Eddie Nalon serve a minimum of seven to ten years and that he be allowed to participate fully in the prison programs that were supposed to be available as a basic human right.

But the Segregation Review Board chose to use psychological torture on Eddie, telling him that he was being released to the main prison population when it had no intention of letting him out. Eddie just couldn't see himself putting up with that kind of treatment in the years ahead. So in the early hours of August 10 (while I was sleeping in the cell next to him) he calmly cut through the vein in his arm and at last found the freedom he had sought so desperately.

At the inquest in December 1974 it was pointed out by those of us who testified that the emergency call systems in the cells had not been working for some time. The guards' union had even gone as far as to negotiate termination of the use of the time-clocks that the guards had to punch during every round of the cell ranges.

The union was able to do that because it is a very strong union, which not only condones existence of a goon squad among the guards, but has enough power to dictate policy to the Canadian Correctional Service. The regulations state that the guards are required to make a round of the cells every hour, but without the time-clocks to ensure that that was being done, they made the rounds only when they felt like it.

Apart from the fact that Eddie shouldn't have been in solitary in the first place, there was a very good chance that his life could have been saved if the emergency call buttons had been working and the guards had been required to punch the time-clocks. The inquest jury recommended that those procedures be reinstated immediately. The Canadian Correctional Services chose to ignore that recommendation.

On the first anniversary of Eddie's death the prisoners of Millhaven held a one-day hunger strike and memorial service and refused to work.

On May 21, 1976, another prisoner, Robert Landers, also died in Millhaven Solitary confinement. The call buttons had not been repaired. He had no way to call for help. All he could manage to do was scribble out a note describing the symptoms of a heart attack. At the inquest a heart specialist confirmed that he should have been in an intensive care unit.

Landers was only 29. When he died the prison population went into deep mourning. Bob had been an avowed prisoners' rights activist for many years. He had given all he had and more to the prison rights movement. The prison population was angry and frustrated.

The Millhaven prisoners decided to ask all Canadian prisoners and concerned citizens to join our one day hunger strike and work stoppage on August 10, 1976.

The support groups brought with them boundless enthusiasm and energy. Their dedication to the prison rights movement has consistently bolstered the fighting spirit of prisoners everywhere. They have earned the love and respect of us all.

This year August 10 is a Sunday, which means that prisoners won't be able to refuse to work on that day. But in prisons, jails and reformatories we will be participating in a one-day hunger strike as we have done every year since the beginning.

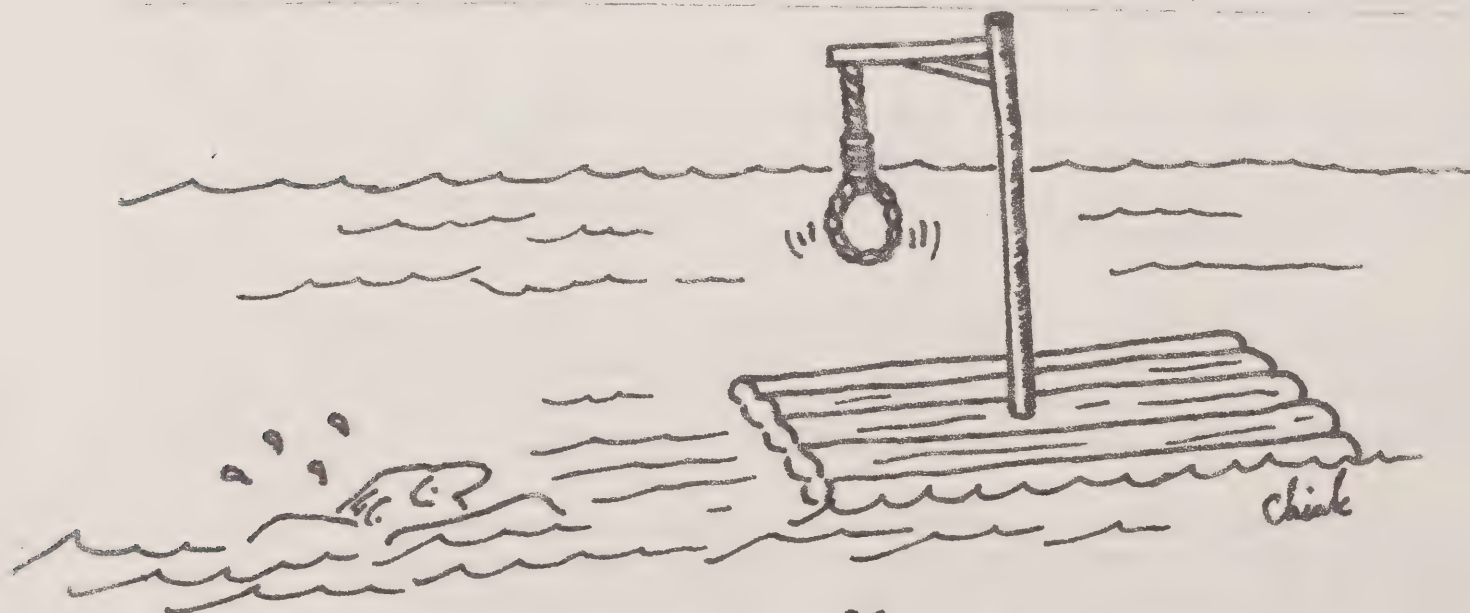
It is a day when we unite to protest the inhuman treatment of a backward and corrupt prison system - treatment that continues to be condoned by the Canadian government and the Canadian Correctional Service. It is a day when we demand a Canadian bill of rights for prisoners; the abolition of solitary confinement

proper medical and psychiatric care; education and trades training; a fair wage for a day's work; uncensored mail and freedom of speech and political beliefs; redress in the courts and full legal representation; family visiting; safe living conditions and fire safety standards, and the vote in all elections.

Prison Justice Day has become the focal point of the Canadian prison rights movement. We will continue to stand together in our fight against oppressors and to bring out the real truth of what is happening behind the walls to the people of Canada and of the world.

Howard Brown

Ed. Note Howie Brown is a prison activist who was involuntarily transferred from Millhaven to British Columbia penitentiary. He was one of the originators of Prison Justice Day; he formed the Odyssey Group and was the co-founder of the Odyssey Newsletter. Howie has been punished often and severely for his beliefs but neither threats or bribes could deter him in his fight for better prison conditions. Howie Brown is a friend - and a man. None of the prisoners at Collins Bay ate any meals on Prison Justice Day, August 10, 1980.





"FOR WANT OF A NAIL..."

I'm sure most people are aware of the poem, "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost, etc." To paraphrase this poem, "For want of a seventeen-cent stamp, justice was lost."

Anytime a prisoner suggests a change in prison or parole policy, he is either labelled a radical, prison activist or is told that public opinion wouldn't permit the change suggested. Prisoners, not being permitted to vote, are not considered a part of the 'public.'

Canada's immigration policy was changed because of public opinion. People, who do have a vote, wrote the Minister of Immigration letting him know of their opinion. Not too long ago, the Minister of Health for the Province of Ontario stated he was going to stop people from using their credit cards to pay their medical bills. Mr. Timbrell received letters from voters stating they wanted to use their credit cards to pay their doctors and Mr. Timbrell quickly changed his mind on the matter.

Prisoners are against Mandatory Supervision, Special Handling Units; we want more paroles issued and we want prison policy based on the premise that we are sent to prison as punishment and not for punishment in whatever way our keepers see fit. Lined up against us are police chiefs, police associations, prison guards' unions, bankers etc. who use their power as groups to push for the legislation they want. But, even the most powerful person in Canada has only one vote on election day. We don't have the vote but our wives, mothers, fathers, children, friends etc. do. They are also part of the public and they do care what happens to us. It should be emphasized that the poorest man in Canada has the same vote as the most powerful man and his vote counts just as much. It is about time that we started to use that vote - and its power.

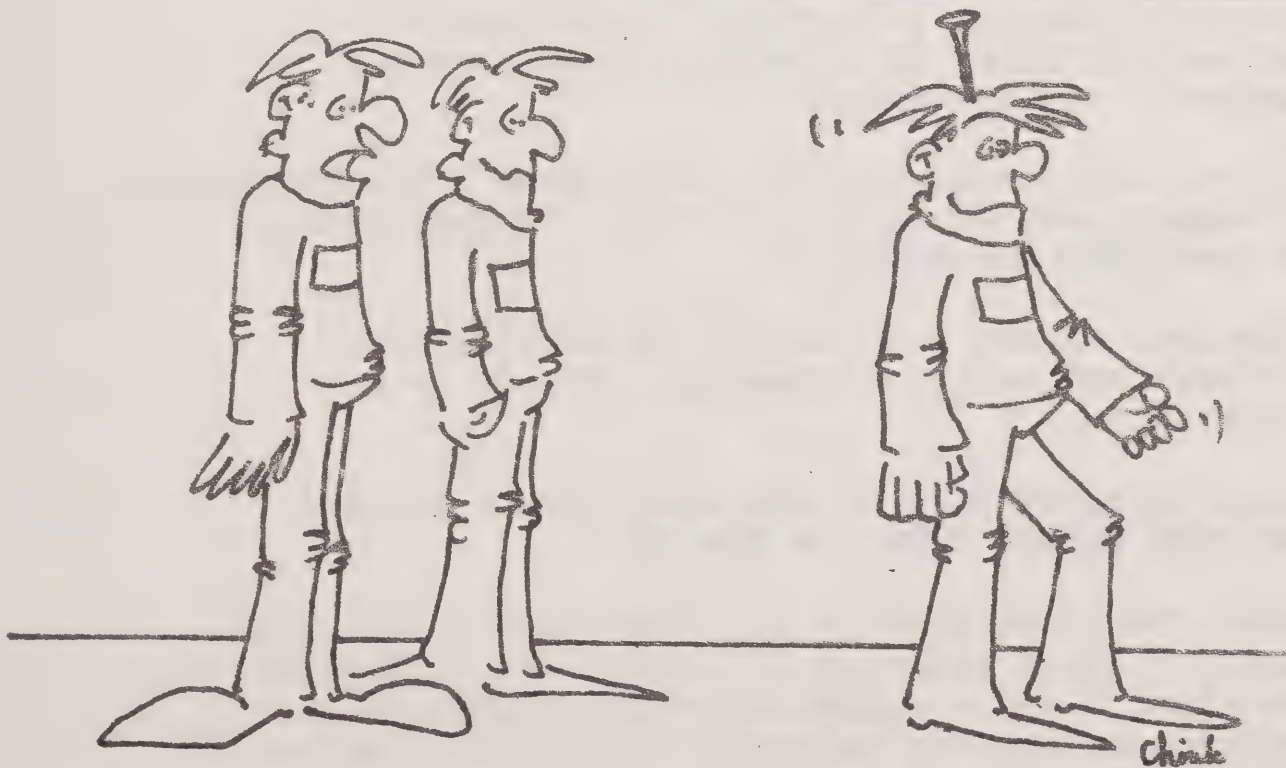
There are approximately 9,400 prisoners in federal prisons in Canada. Each prisoner has at least one person on the outside who cares x what happens to him and each of these people have a vote on election day. They are part of the 'public'. Therefore, what do you think would happen if each prisoner across Canada

had at least one person write a letter to Robert Kaplan, the Solicitor General, demanding that changes be made in the prison and parole system that would be beneficial to all prisoners? Added to these letters would be letters from groups that are interested in prison and parole reform. Does anyone truly believe that any politician could afford to ignore 15,000 or so individual letters? We are going to find out because one of the projects that the Collins Bay Chapter of the J.H.S. has undertaken is to get this campaign underway.

Further information can be obtained from the Collins Bay Chapter of the J.H.S. but when we are ready to get the project rolling, it will be well publicized.

All it will cost is a seventeen cent stamp and a piece of paper. You can't beat the price.

George Watson.



Tough???.....he keeps his wig on with a nail!

THINK ABOUT IT

In 1970, the National Parole Board and the National Parole Service had a combined staff of 386 employees and a budget of less than five million dollars. In that year, 2,785 federal prisoners received paroles.

In 1978, the NPB and the NPS had a combined staff of 1,110 employees and their combined budget was thirty-three million dollars. That year 1,616 federal prisoners received paroles.

These agencies had their budget increased by twenty-eight million dollars over that in 1970 and they had an extra 724 staff but they paroled 1,069 less prisoners in 1978 than they did in 1970!

This is what William Outerbridge, Chairman of the National Parole Board was quoted as saying in the Ottawa Citizen January 30, 1980 edition:

"Fewer prisoners are now being paroled than five years ago. The primary mandate of the parole board is community protection. Today's prisoners are serving longer sentences and there's a higher degree of violent crime ..."

Exactly one month previously, the Commissioner of Penitentiaries Donald Yeomans, was quoted in Let's Talk, the penitentiary service newsletter as saying:

"The myth abounds that our prisons are rife with violence and dangerous offenders. This is grossly inaccurate ..."

On Friday, September 5, 1980, the Toronto Globe and Mail reported that violent crime was down 24.1%.

Obviously, the reason given by Mr. Outerbridge is not valid even though it is an expensive (\$28,000,000.00 & 724 staff) one but there hasn't been a whisper raised by anyone over the contradiction between the chairman of the NPB and the boss of the prisons. There hasn't been anyone to suggest that the

true reason why the parole rate has dropped is that, maybe the parole board is incompetent. We will never find out for the simple reason - the parole board doesn't have to answer to anyone. They are autonomous.

D I D Y O U K N O W ?

There are approximately 2,300 penitentiary personnel in the Ontario region, the majority to whom work and live in the Kingston area? This makes them comparable in size to industries such as Dupont (2,000 employees) and Alcan (1,500).

Let's Talk.

D I D Y O U K N O W ?

There are 22,000 prisoners in the United States Federal System and there are 9,500 employees, including the staff of Headquarters in Washington. There are 9,317 prisoners in Canada's Federal Penitentiaries and there are 9,465 employees.

The Canadian Penitentiary Service has approximately 270% more staff for a given number of inmates than the U. S. Federal System and 218% more staff for a given number of inmates than the State of California. Put another way, the staff-inmate ratio, which is about one-to-one in Canada is about one-to-three in the United States.

Pages 68-69 Parliamentary
Sub-Committee Report to
Parliament on the Penitentiary
System in Canada

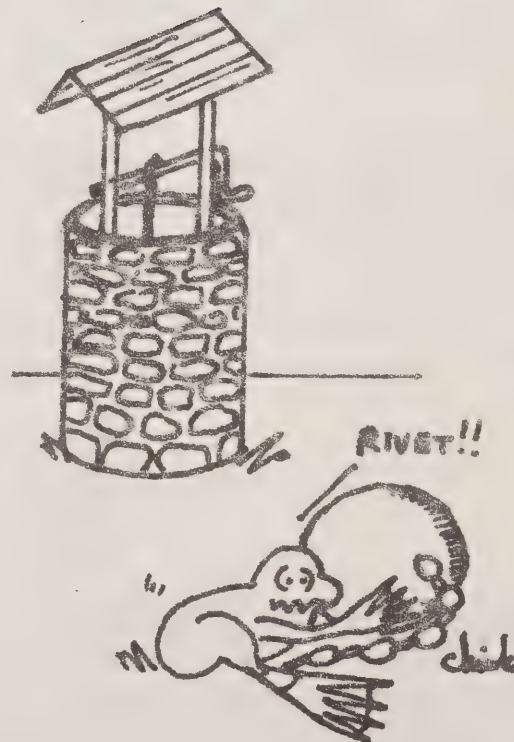
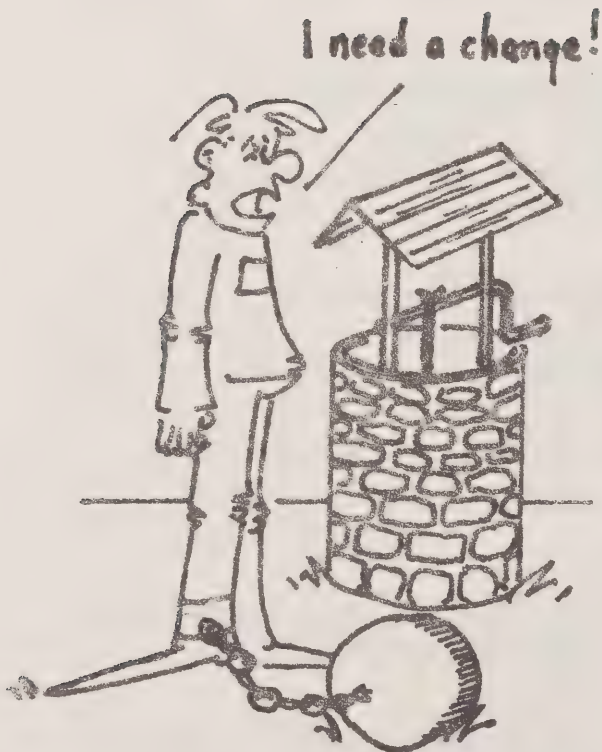
California is where they have prisoners like Sirhan Sirhan and Charles Manson but apparently we Canadian prisoners are more dangerous because they one have 1 staff for three prisoners down there while we are on a one-to-one basis.

D I D Y O U K N O W ?

The budget for the Correctional Services this year is the

whopping sum of \$426,000,000.00?

While it is said by prison authorities that it cost \$25,000.00 or \$27,500.00 (depends on who is being quoted) that if you divide the budget by the number of prisoners - 426,000,000.00 by 9,317 you arrive at the figure of \$45,722.00 for each prisoner.



THE GRIEVANCE BOARD

One of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee's recommendations was the establishment of a Grievance Board in every penitentiary. This board was to consist of 5 members, 2 voting staff members and two voting prisoners members. The fifth member was to act as chairman and only have voting privileges in case of a tie vote. The warden was to have the final say in any decision. The purpose of the grievance board was to give a prisoner with a grievance a fair hearing.

At first glance, this practice would seem to be a progressive one but once the procedures are investigated, one discovers that the appearance of fairness is an illusion. Practices are the same as they were before there was a grievance board; the warden still does what he wants.

For example, a prisoner, with a grievance, appears before the board and states his case. The two staff members and the two prisoner members may agree unanimously that the grievance is legitimate. Then, the board's recommendations are sent to the warden, the warden rejects the recommendations and sends the grievance back to the prisoner. The prisoner decides to go to the next level, and, lo and behold, the next level is the warden again.

By the time the prisoner gets his grievance to the final level at Ottawa and gets a reply back, 3 months have passed.

If the warden, is not compelled to abide by the board's decision, what is the purpose of having a board? Where is there any change in the old policy whereby a prisoner complained to the warden and the warden just ignored the complaint?

If the warden's decision is a "no" on one Tuesday, does anyone believe he is going to change his reply to "yes" the following Tuesday.? Why should two levels of the same grievance go to the warden? All that is accomplished is an extra week of stalling on the prisoner's grievance.

This program was initiated to help the prisoner and because the Parliamentary Sub-Committee recognized the inadequacy of past practices but all it has accomplished is to give the prison system an opportunity to tell the public how "liberal" Canada's prison policy is, "Oh, yes. The prisoners in our

penitentiaries have a grievance board and the two prisoner members have the same voting powers as the staff members."

It sounds great but a prisoner is better off writing home and complaining to his mother - at least that way, he will receive Mom's sympathy.

M. Breaton





A S K I N G F O R A L M S

Coming away from
Manpower
I meet a man with outstretched hand
"I've nothing myself,"
I tell him, too true
but he grumbles and growls,
"I'll not believe you."

Karl Marx did say
and mother echoes too,
until your belly's full
there's little you can do.

and long ago a sage has written:
"ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN."

go ask the banker
propped high in his chair
ask the credit collector
do you think he will care?
ask the rich
eyes glazed with greed and glory,
ask the welfare agent
she's not sure to like your story.

So if you do not qualify
ask the thief
he may know why -

why the thrill
to trick them all
their lousy game
where suckers crawl
who punch the clock
and bow down low
until retirement deals
the final blow.

Yet we are so wealthy
we have two colour t.v.'s
They drone, "Come buy me,
you need one of these."

And we are so healthy
our children they are
bruised
we've forgotten how
to teach them
except with lies and rules.

Yes, we are all so happy
with what we have and are
that most often you will find us
asking for beer at the bar.

and when
will our
asking
answer our
needing?

Ruth Elliott

HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA

Last Saturday
I fell asleep
watching
Hockey Night in Canada
Colorado and Vancouver
were tied,
There was no news
on the game
in Washington.
As I dozed,
I dreamt
Bobby Hull
had real hair.
The Rocket
didn't use
Grecian Formula.
Frank Mahovlich
was a Maple Leaf.
Gordie Howe
was not playing
with his grandson.
Valerie Tretiak
was unheard of.
I was rudely awakened
when Howie Meeker
announced the NHL
expanded to Miami

Tom Clement

HERE COMES RONALD

Ronald, the latest
poll shows you running
a close second
to Santa Claus.
The Easter Bunny,
the tooth fairy,
and Mother Goose
are washed up.
Your school tours
and public appearances
are really paying off.
Even Santa is doing
MacDonald's television commercials;
Laid off elves
are forced into
waged slavery
at the golden arches.
Four old reindeer
have been sold
and ground up
to be made into
1 billion Big Macs.

Tom Clemente

T R E E A N D C R E A T I O N

There is a tree in my backyard.
Oh,
it's not a myth tree
like an oak or a cedar
but it's a good tree
with huge, outreaching branches
that dance with joy,
even without the wind.

On it
I have spent hours
staring hopefully
in no particular direction.

And often
I share its joy
in silent celebration of life.

In our minds
(Yes, the tree is a
powerful thinker)
we often think of creation.

And, at best,
we come up with
the echoes left for us
by the one true
creator.

Brian Burch
Sault Ste Marie, Ont.

T I N A

I wake alone
in a darkened room
to think of you
running free
while I'm imprisoned
by my destiny.

I turn to you
but you're not there.

For I forgot
that I left you
and cry
because you're not here.

Brain Burch - Sault Ste Marie, Ont.

O N P H Y S I C S

Beyond the thoughtful analysis
of all events
exists the reality
which continues to defy
measurement.

Brian Burch - Sault Ste Marie

C O L D H O T E L

It must have been the moon
made me lonely that night
When the daughters of Jerusalem
rose out of bed
and sang love
into the warm air
I felt my sorrow
next to me
the blood froze
inside
until I could no longer speak

Today in sun
I can afford
these smiles
the fear that loomed so near
has gently subsided
and I walk to my toils
with a kind of temporary
peace.

R. McRoberts,
Toronto

T H E G H O S T O F Y O U

I covered my heart
with flowers
stood my midnight watch
waiting
for the ghost of you

I turned these old hands
into wings
flew the perimeter of sky
watching by moonlight
for the ghost of you

I took this unworthy love
drowned it
like a burlapped cat
listening always to the wind
listening
For the ghost of you.

R. McRoberts,
Toronto

COLLINS BAY CHAPTER
JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF CANADA

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. The abolishment of Mandatory Supervision
2. The abolishment of all Special Handling Units
3. The abolishment of 25-year minimum sentences
4. Against construction of new prisons
5. A more humane prison system
6. Decent wages
7. Introduction of prison industry
8. A more liberal parole program
9. Pre-release programs
10. Alternatives to imprisonment
11. Fair sentencing practices
12. To make the public aware of the prison and parole systems
13. To make Bail a right - not a privilege
14. To fight for prisoners' rights
15. To constantly remind everyone, we are sent to prison as punishment and not for punishment
16. To help all prisoners in whatever way we can.

* As we accomplish these objectives, they will be replaced with others.

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